

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3693

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 2267

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GY, CU

SUBJECT: GUYANA-CUBA TO INCREASE COOPERATION

SUMMARY: REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GUYANA-CUBA MIXED COMMISSION AGREED TO INCREASED COOPERATION BETWEEN THEIR TWO COUNTRIES--MOSTLY ON THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL LEVEL--FOLLOWING TALKS HELD HERE NOVEMBER 2-9. THE AGREEMENTS REACHED SEEM TO BE OF MORE SYMBOLIC THAN SUBSTANTIVE IMPORTANCE, BUT ARE INDICATIVE OF DEVELOPING AND FAVORABLE BILATERAL RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. GOG AND CUBAN REPRESENTATIVES HAVE AGREED TO INCREASED COOPERATION BETWEEN THEIR TWO COUNTRIES AT THE SECOND MEETING OF THE GUYANA-CUBA MIXED COMMISSION HELD HERE NOVEMBER 2-9, IN KEEPING WITH THE GUYANA-CUBA EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT SIGNED IN HAVANA IN NOVEMBER, 1975.

2. THE CUBAN DELEGATION, WHICH INCLUDED THE HEAD
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OF THE CARIBBEAN SECTION OF THE CUBAN COMMUNIST

PARTY'S LATIN AMERICAN DIVISION, OSVALDO CARDENAS, WAS HEADED BY VICE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS DR. PELEGRIN TORRAS WHO EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE DISCUSSIONS. GUYANA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MINISTER DESMOND HOYTE WAS REPORTED AS STATING THAT THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD FORM A VITAL LINK IN WHAT HE BELIEVED WOULD BE THE UNITY OF THE CARIBBEAN PEOPLE. HE WENT ON TO NOTE THAT "WE IN GUYANA HAVE DRAWN GREAT STRENGTH AND INSPIRATION FROM THE CUBAN PEOPLE. WE HAVE BEEN HEARTENED BY YOUR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE COUNTED YOUR SUCCESSES OUR SUCCESSES, AND WHEN YOU HAVE ENDURED MOMENTS OF ANXIETY, WE HAVE SHARED THAT ANXIETY, FOR WE BELIEVE IT IS BY THIS UNITY AND WILLINGNESS TO STAND TOGETHER AT ALL TIMES THAT WE SHALL TRIUMPH OVER THE FORCES THAT CONFRONT US, THE FORCES OF COLONIALISM, NEO-COLONIALISM, AND IMPERIALISM."

3. THE GOG-OWNED DAILY "CHRONICLE" OF NOVEMBER 10 MENTIONED THE FOLLOWING "HIGHLIGHTS" RESULTING FROM THE DISCUSSIONS:

" EDUCATION-CUBAN SPECIALISTS TO LECTURE IN GUYANA FOR SHORT PERIODS ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CUBAN LIFE; GUYANESE SPANISH TEACHERS TO RECEIVE LANGUAGE TRAINING IN CUBA AND CUBAN ENGLISH TEACHERS TO RECEIVE TRAINING IN GUYANA; CUBA WILL PROVIDE TEN SCHOLARSHIPS TO GUYANESE FOR TRAINING AT MIDDLE LEVEL IN TECHNICAL PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION.

"CULTURE-EXCHANGE OF DANCE AND MUSICAL GROUPS. A GUYANESE STEELBAND WILL VISIT CUBA AND GUYANA WILL PROVIDE A TUNER AND/OR TRAINER TO HELP START A STEELBAND IN CUBA. CUBA WILL PROVIDE SIX SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ONE TO THREE YEARS AT ITS NATIONAL SCHOOL OF ART.

"SUGAR INDUSTRY-COLLABORATION IN THE STUDY OF CANE SMUT DISEASE. GUYANA WILL SEND EXPERTS TO STUDY THE INDUSTRY IN CUBA, INCLUDING RESEARCH
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INTO THE USE OF BAGASSE TO PRODUCE CATTLE FEED AND FURNITURE.

"CONSTRUCTION-GUYANESE EXPERTS WILL GO TO CUBA TO LOOK AT METHODS BEING USED THERE, INCLUDING PHYSICAL PLANNING. IN ADDITION, GUYANA WILL SEND A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE FOR A ONE-YEAR ATTACHMENT TO ONE OF CUBA'S UNIQUE MICO-BRIGADE CONSTRUCTION TEAMS TO ACQUIRE

EXPERTISE FOR USE BACK HOME.

"IT IS ALSO INTENDED THAT IMMEDIATE STEPS
WILL BE TAKEN TO ESTABLISH A COMMERCIAL
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GUYANA NATIONAL CO-
OPERATIVE BANK AND THE BANCO NACIONAL DE CUBA.

"THE COMING YEAR WILL ALSO WITNESS AN
EXCHANGE OF SPORT TEAMS IN A NUMBER OF FIELDS,
AS WELL AS EXCHANGE OF PRINT AND BROADCAST
JOURNALISTS AND STAGING OF EXHIBITIONS IN THE
TWO COUNTRIES."

4. COMMENT: BOTH THE CUBANS AND THE GUYANESE
SEEM TO HAVE CONSIDERED THE NEW AGREEMENTS TO BE
SYMBOLICALLY, RATHER THAN SUBSTANTIVELY,
IMPORTANT. OSVALDO CARDENAS, REPORTEDLY ONE OF
THE HIGHEST RANKING BLACK MEMBERS OF THE CUBAN
POLITBURO, WAS SUPPOSEDLY INCLUDED IN THE GROUP
IN AN ATTEMPT TO BELIEVE PM BURNHAM'S OBSERVATION
THAT BLACKS DO NOT HOLD IMPORTANT POSITIONS IN
THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT. THE CUBAN DELEGATION
WAS WARMLY RECEIVED BY THE GOG. THE GUYANESE
MAY HAVE GONE TOO FAR, HOWEVER, IN PROVIDING THE
CUBANS WITH A TASTE OF LIFE IN GUYANA WHEN
DELEGATION LEADER TORRAS WAS NEARLY "CHOKED AND
ROBBED" (I.E. MUGGED) ON NOVEMBER 9 WHILE NEAR
THE CUBAN EMBASSY. HE WAS RESCUED BY SEVERAL
OF HIS COMPATRIOTS WHO REPORTEDLY SEVERELY BEAT
HIS ASSAILANT.
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